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St. Mary's Covid-19 Response Plan

Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in St. Mary's.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET).

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff members and others. As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

3. Control Measures

4. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

5. Hygiene and Cleaning

6. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

7. Special Education Needs

8. Staff Duties

9. Covid related absence management

10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same. Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie;

1. St. Mary's COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

St. Mary's COVID-19 Policy Statement

St. Mary's is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.
This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**

Mr. Edward O' Riordan (Principal)

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**

Mr. John Hughes (Chairperson, Board of Management)

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education. Details for the safe reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Before reopening the school for the 2020/21 school the school had processes in place to include the following:

- arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates
- arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required
- ensured that staff had reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- identified a Lead Worker Representative
- displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school, taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment
- updated the health and safety risk assessment
- made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- reviewed the school buildings to check the following:

- did the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease?

- had school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?

- had bin collections and other essential services resumed?

I. **Induction Training**
II. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
III. **Lead Worker Representative**
IV. **Signage**
V. **Making Changes to School Layout**
VI. **Health and Safety Risk Assessment**
VII. **Access to School and Contact Log**

I. Induction Training

All staff undertook and completed COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training was to ensure that staff had full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- COVID-19 symptoms
- what to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- outline of the COVID-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the COVID-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal, who is supported in this role by the Board of Management.

Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year was made available to all schools via email and staff Whatsapp group on 20.8.'20.

A national information campaign to support parents and pupils happened in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

II. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, all staff members completed a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available electronically or from the principal. A hard copy is available also at **Appendix 1**.

A RTW form was completed and returned **at least 3 days** before returning to work.

The principal also provided details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

Some school staff may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at very high risk. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

The list of people in very high-risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer

- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

III. Lead Worker Representative

Lead Worker Representative:	**Don O' Neill doneill@marysbns.ie**
Assistant Lead worker Representative:	**Rachel Quirke rquirke@marysbns.ie**

The Lead Worker Representative will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others, he or she should contact the lead worker who will engage with the principal or Board of Management.

Role of the Lead Worker Representative
In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative is to:

- represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts
- work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19
- keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice
- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- in conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- conduct regular reviews of safety measures
- report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them
- consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area
- following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required
- consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace
- make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace

The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

- assist the LWR in their duties as set out above
- deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

All staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

IV. Signage
The school has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms, SEN rooms, the yard, the hall and toilets.

V. Making Changes to School Layout

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Classrooms have been decluttered. Desk layouts were reconfigured to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

The yard lines were repainted. Infant and Middle yards were divided. The pedestrian entrance was divided and painted to create a one-way system for entering and exiting the school.

VI. Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A template risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is attached at ***Appendix 2.***

The school reviewed our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures were documented.

The school also reviewed our existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will be documented.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, schools should call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

VII. Access to School and Contact Log

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities is maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts. **See Appendix 3**

The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols.

Schools are reminded that all school records and data must be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school in their role as data controller.

3. Control Measures

I. **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**
II. **Respiratory Hygiene**
III. **Hand Hygiene**
IV. **Physical Distancing**
V. **Use of PPE in Schools**
VI. **Ventilation**

Staff and pupils are to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test

Staff and pupils are not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

Staff and pupils are advised to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

- promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID-19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.
- physical distancing (of 2 metres) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible

I. Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. Full guidance on COVID-19 symptoms is available from the HSE but they include:

- fever or high temperature (38 degrees C or above)
- new persistent cough
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

II. Respiratory Hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Do

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

III. Hand Hygiene

Wash your hands frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. New sinks have been installed in all classrooms along with an additional soap dispenser unit containing a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water and a paper towel dispenser unit.

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:
https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html

Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitisers (when hands are clean). Two hand sanitiser units have been installed in every classroom and SEN room. One will be available at the entry/exit point of the school building. When hand rubs/gels are being used in school, care should be taken to ensure that pupils do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic. Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands. Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Hot air dryers are available for hand drying in the toilets. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing have been placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- on arrival at school
- before eating or drinking
- after using the toilet
- before & after playing outdoors
- when their hands are physically dirty
- when they cough or sneeze

IV. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in primary school settings allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 metre distance and where possible 2 metres. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- increasing separation
- decreasing interaction

Increasing separation

Desk layouts will be reconfigured to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

The rooms have been cleared of any unnecessary furniture/shelves and so on.

The teacher's desk should be at least 1 metre and where possible 2 metres away from pupil desks.

Decreasing interaction

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a primary school depends on the school setting and a common-sense approach is required recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils.

In primary schools, a distance of one metre should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore, achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary or special schools, is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary or special school for all pupils.

Where possible workstations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.

Pupils and their teachers were structured into Class Bubbles (that is, a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical.

There should be at least one metre distance between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.

Generally speaking the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.

The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.

To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible.

Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.

Additional measures to decrease interaction include:

- limit interaction on arrival and departure and in the corridors and hall.
- social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged
- where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource
- staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items
- encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth)
- where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils should be arranged to encourage physical distancing of 2 metres where possible.

Walking/cycling to school is encouraged as much as possible.

A distance of 2 metres between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff should be maintained. If 2 metres cannot be maintained, as much distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

Aim of any arrangements is to avoid congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing may not be respected.

Staggered drop off/pick up times were used for the first two mornings back.

To avoid pupils congregating as they arrive at school, they head straight to their classroom from 8.40 onwards. All teachers are in their rooms from 8.40 to facilitate this.

Staff

A distance of 2 metres is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staffroom and arriving to work.

If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

Physical distancing will be observed between staff members within the staffroom through the use of staggered breaks and so on.

Staff meetings will be held in the school hall initially and remotely thereafter if deemed necessary.

We will implement a no hand-shaking policy.

Minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimised where possible.

Corridors/Hall

Briefly passing someone in a hall/corridor is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

Yard/Supervision

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Mid-morning & Lunchtime Breaks

Break A (10.25-10.40 & 12.10 – 12.40)

Junior Yard	Middle Yard	Senior Yard	
Senior Infants Bubble Rm. 26	*First Class Bubble Rm. 11*	**Free**	Fifth Class Bubble Rm. 5
		Third Class Bubble Rm. 15	**Free**
Junior Infants Rms. 1 & 2	*First Class Bubble Rm. 12*	**Free**	Fifth Class Bubble Rm. 6
		Third Class Bubble Rm. 16	**Free**
		Free	**Free**

Break B (10.45- 11.00 & 12.45 – 1.15)

Junior Yard	Middle Yard	Senior Yard	
Senior Infants Bubble Rm. 3	*Second Class Bubble Rm. 13*	Fourth Class Bubble Rm. 9	**Free**
		Free	Sixth Class Bubble Rm. 7
Senior Infants Bubble Rm. 4	*Second Class Bubble Rm. 14*	Fourth Class Bubble Rm. 10	**Free**
		Free	Sixth Class Bubble Rm. 8
		Free	**Free**

- **We will continue with two mid-morning and two lunchtime breaks for now**
- **Fifth class, third class, first class and junior infants will have breaks from 10.25 to 10.40 and from 12.10 to 12.40.**
- **Sixth class, fourth class, second class and Senior Infants will have breaks from 10.45 – 11.00 and 12.45 – 1.15.**
- **One teacher will supervise the Junior Infant/Senior Infant yard and first/second yard. The other teacher will supervise the senior yard.**
- **In the senior yard every second section will be left unoccupied so classes can remain in their bubbles.**
- **Tracy will be the First aider for Break B and Linda/Fiona for Break A. The bench outside Room 3 will act as First Aid station.**
- **On wet days, the same break times apply. Teacher on Infant/Middle yard supervises Junior Infants & First Class or Senior Infants & Fourth Class. Teacher on Senior Yard supervises Third Class & Fifth Class or Second Class & Sixth Class.**

- **We will use the yard at the start of the year so that the boys can get used to the routine. If we get nice weather in September, we might use the field.**
- **If using the field for break; the teacher on the 'Senior Yard' on the rota covers the shed pitch (3rd/4th) and middle pitch (1st/2nd) and the teacher on the 'Junior Yard' covers the pitch in front of the church (5th/6th) and the infants (JI/SI) in front of the office.**
- **Junior Infant teachers will not be on the rota for August/September as they will be doing extra supervision of their own classes. As there are three Junior Infant classes Rm. 26 will use the smaller Infant yard section and RMs. 1 & 2 will share the bigger section.**

Arrival & Dismissal

- **We will continue to use Croke Park hours for the early admission of pupils. Outside doors should be open at 8.40 at the latest and early arrivals supervised in the classroom from that time. Teachers in the classroom by 8.40. SNA's in the classroom by 8.30.**

Staff Bubbles & Supervision 2021-22

Break A- JI, 1st, 3rd, 5th	Break B - SI, 2nd, 4th, 6th
10.25-10.40 12.10- 12.40	10.45-11.00 12.45-1.15
Hall/ Staffroom 1. Claire O'H 2. Kevin 3. Louise 4. Saidhbh 5. Caoimhe 6. Eoghan 7. Rachel Q. 8. Don/Rachel L 9. Harry 10. Valerie McH 11. Alan 12. Jenny 13. Lizzie 14. Tracy* 15. Anne 16. Jean* 17. Geraldine	**Hall/ Staffroom** 1. Rebecca 2. Sonja 3. Claire McG 4. Orina 5. Ciara 6. Freda 7. Fearghal 8. Antóin 9. Josephine/Mary 10. Niamh/Aidan 11. Maurice 12. Linda/Fiona 13. Jane 14. Sheelagh* 15. Janet 16. Valerie J* 17. Edward/Don

- **The staffroom is set up for 9 staff members and the hall is set up for 10.**
- **Jean & Tracy will make the tea before Break A and tidy up/sanitize tables after it and Valerie & Sheelagh will do the same for Break B.**

V. Use of PPE in Schools

PPE will not be required to be worn within schools according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

This might include roles such as:

- assisting with intimate care needs
- where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups, or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

Masks

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- has trouble breathing
- is unconscious or incapacitated
- is unable to remove it without help
- has special needs to who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering

For staff, face coverings should not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. Wearing a face covering will conceal facial expression and make communication difficult.

The use of a visor as an alternative may be considered where there is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets. Visors have been provided for all staff and all staff are encouraged to have their own face coverings/masks.

Medical Grade Masks Schools in the EN16483 category are provided to all SNAs and teachers in SEN and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs.

Gloves

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves.

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

VI. Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools' The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day)

and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

4. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

I. Choir/Music Performances

II. Sport Activities

III. Shared Equipment

IV. After-school Activities

I. Choir/Music Performances: Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

II. Sport Activities: refer to the HSPC guidance on return to sport. The hall will not be available for P.E. lessons.

III. Shared Equipment:

Toys
All toys will be kept clean and sanitized regularly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids will be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

If cloth or soft toys are used, they should be machine washable.

Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths will be capable of being washed and disinfected.

All play equipment will be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned, they will be discarded.

Clean toys and equipment will be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard.

At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used will be for individual use only.

Cleaning Procedure for Toys

- wash the toy using soapy water or with the steamer
- rinse the toy in clean water
- thoroughly dry the toy
- toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried
- in some situations, toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths. Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified

If disinfection is required: Milton solution will be used.

Art
Where possible pupils should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics
Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between uses. The Computer Room will not be open for September. We will review this at the end of the month.

Musical Equipment/Instruments
To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

Library Policy
Where practical pupils should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment
Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

IV After-school Activities
There will be no indoor after-school activities until Halloween at the earliest. Fun Club will continue because it is during school time and involves small groups from the infant classes who do not have to physically distance.

5. Hygiene and Cleaning

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HSPC health advice for schools and was covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19.

Schools are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities.

The school will be cleaned once per day after the children leave. Additional cleaning (an extra 20 hours per week) will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, desktops, backs of chairs, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

There should be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/ staff member with suspected Covid-19 was present

The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

Person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.

Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine-based product (household bleach).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HSPC health advice for schools) as soon as is practically possible.

6. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how the school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in the school setting.

School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

The foyer opposite Room 23 will act as the designated isolation area within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 will be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door, outdoor but covered and away from other staff and pupils.

All staff will be provided with a simple step by step list of instructions on what to do if dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- if the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
- if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin
- provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with

symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided

- if the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- if they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect
- carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

7. Special Education Needs

I. **Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs**
II. **Hand hygiene**
III. **Equipment**

I. Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances is not practical or appropriate to implement. The focus is therefore on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection. Where symptoms are present - children should not attend school.

Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

II. Hand hygiene

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean.)

III. Equipment

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment.

Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean
- care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general-purpose detergent and warm water

- equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child, for example toileting aids

If equipment is soiled with body fluids:

- first clean thoroughly with detergent and water
- then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant
- rinse with water and dry

8. Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.

Staff are advised not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined
- complete the Return to Work (RTW) form before they return to work
- must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school
- must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained
- make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19
- not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances
- if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above
- keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same

9. Covid related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.

The department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum. Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support and so on.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided.

As part of the services provided by Spectrum Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**

Mr. Edward O' Riordan (Principal)

Signed: _____ **Date: _____**

Mr. John Hughes (Chairperson, Board of Management)

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Return to Work Form (RTW)

Appendix 2: Checklist for Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19

Appendix 3: Template Risk Assessment

Appendix 4: Contract Tracing Log

Appendix 5: Arrangements for Remote Teaching in Event of School Closure

Appendix 6: Checklist for School Management

APPENDIX 1RETURN TO WORK FORM- COVID-19 –UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021

This questionnaire must be completed by staff **3 days** in advance of returning to work.
If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice **before** returning to work.

Name of Employee (Please Print) _____

Name of School: St. Mary's BNS, Grange Road, Rathfarnham, D14 PO46 (Roll No. 19446V)

Name of Principal: Edward O'Riordan

Please tick ✓appropriate box

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste, now, or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Are you awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test?		
4.	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6	Have you been advised by a doctor to restrict your movements?		
7.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? Note: If you are at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from Covid-19 you may be advised to cocoon		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Employee's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

UPDATED 23RD AUGUST '21

SYMPTOMS DISPLAYED

Fever or high temperature above 38° or above ☐
New Cough ☐
Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties ☐
Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste ☐
NEW - Diarrhoea ☐ symptom of Delta variant
NEW -Headache☐ symptom of Delta

WHAT TO DO

1. **IMMEDIATELY PUT PUPIL SITTING IN FRESH AIR ON BENCH OUTSIDE CLASSROOM**
2. **NOTIFY either Valerie, School Secretary ☐ ext 131 or 086 399 4714**
   OR
   Don O' Neill, Deputy Principal ☐ ext 100 or 086 894 2503
   OR
   Lizzie Houston, ☐ ext 118 or 087 681 6452
3. **Ask teacher next door to supervise your class ☐**
4. **Put face mask on yourself and bring your mobile phone with you ☐**
5. **Give person a facemask and instruct how to put it on ☐**
6. **Maintain a distance of 2 metres from suspected person where possible ☐**
7. **If adult, accompany individual to the "COMFORT BAY" via safest route ☐**
8. **Advise the individual NOT to touch other people, surfaces, or objects. ☐**
9. **Take and record the individual's temperature ☐**

TEMPERATURE READING _____ TIME RECORDED _____

WHEN PARENT/GUARDIAN ARRIVES TO COLLECT PUPIL

- **Advise Parent/guardian to call their own GP for further instructions and that the pupil should continue to wear the face mask until they reach home. ☐**
- **Advise individual NOT to use public transport ☐**

IF ADULT PRESENTS WITH SYMPTOMS

Ensure they feel well enough to travel home. ☐
Call next of kin to collect them if not well enough to go home unaccompanied ☐
If very ill, call ambulance ☐
Advise individuals NOT to use public transport

NAME OF PERSON WHO IS UNWELL

_____

Pupil ☐ Teacher ☐ SNA ☐ Principal ☐ Secretary ☐ Caretaker ☐

Room No. _____ Class _____ Class Teacher _____

NAME OF PERSON COLLECTING INDIVIDUAL: _____

MOBILE NO. _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

NB BEFORE LEAVING BENCH OUTSIDE CLASSROOM OR COMFORT BAY

Double wrap any tissues, PPE etc and place in pedal bin. ☐

Lock Comfort bay and put up 'No Entry' sign until the area is cleaned & disinfected ☐

Arrange for the area where the individual was to be cleaned as soon as practical ☐

Appendix 3: Covid-19 Risk Assessment

COVID-19 Risk Template (List identifies COVID-19 as the hazard and outlines control measures required to deal with this risk)

Hazards	Is the hazard present?	What is the risk?	Risk Rating H= High M=Medium L=Low	Controls (when all controls are in place risk will be reduced	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls	Person Responsible	Signature & date when action completed
COVID-19	N	Illness	M	School Covid19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice	✓	Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement	Don O' Neill	August 2020
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Return to Work Forms received and reviewed	Don O' Neill	August 2020
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Induction Training provided	DES	August 2020
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Contact log in place	Valerie Jacobs	August 2020
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette	All staff & pupils	August 2020
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Checklist for dealing with	Valerie Jacobs	August 2020

						a suspected case drawn up		
COVID-19	N	Illness	L		✓	Isolation area set up	Valerie Jacobs	August 2020

Appendix 4: Contact Tracing Log

Name of School	**St. Mary's BNS**		**School Contact Person**	**Edward O' Riordan Principal** **Don O'Neill Deputy Principal/Lead Worker**	
Address of School	**Grange Road, Rathfarnham** **Dublin D14 PO46**		**For Queries only: Phone No**	**Valerie Jacobs (Secretary)** **01-4931477**	
			Email	secretary@marysbns.ie principal@marysbns.ie doneill@marysbns.ie	
Name of Visitor				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes ☐ No ☐	
Date of Visit	__ __ / __ __ /_____	**Time**	**Entry to school** _____ am ☐ pm ☐	**Exit from School** _____ am ☐ pm ☐	
Visitor Status	Contractor ☐	Parent/Guardian ☐	Other ☐ Please complete: _____		
Contact details of visitor	Company Name (if applicable)				
	Address				
	Contact No.		Email Address		
	Reason for Visit				

Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)	
Name of Person visited	**Length of time spent with each person in the school**

Appendix 5: Arrangements for Remote Teaching in Event of School Closure

Classes from Junior infants to Seond Class will communicate through Class Dojo.

Classes from thrird to sixth class will communicate through Seesaw

Appendix 6: Checklist for School Management

	Yes/No
Staff • Have you requested confirmation that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following periods of closure such as school holidays? • Have you advised staff and pupils not to return to or attend school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus? • Have you advised staff and pupils not to return or attend school if they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel? • Have you advised staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school?	
Hand / Respiratory Hygiene • Have you told staff and pupils when they need to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser? This includes: ¬ When entering and exiting vehicles ¬ When entering and exiting school buildings **Physical Distancing** • Have you advised staff of the Department's guidance to achieve good ventilation? • Have you checked any mechanical ventilation systems to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air is used?	
Checklist for Cleaning • Have you put in place a written cleaning schedule to be made available to cleaning staff including: ¬ Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as vending machines, coffee machines and door handles?	